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WHY CHINA REFUSED TO SIGN THE PEACE TREATY

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July, 1919

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT

Owing to the absence of Mr. K. P. Wang, the Secretary of the Committee, please address all communications temporarily to

MR. Q. K. CHEN

(Treasurer and Acting Secretary)

1090 Amsterdam Avenue

New York City

JUL 30 1919

WHY CHINA REFUSED TO SIGN THE PEACE TREATY

China's refusal to sign the Peace Treaty seems to have somewhat surprised the whole world. Some people may scoff at her action but many more have openly admired her stand. The reason for China's refusal is very simple. She refused to sign the Treaty because she could not recognize nor acquiesce in the perpetuation of a crime committed by Germany in 1898. China has no objection to the Treaty except the unjust Shantung clauses which read as follows:

ARTICLE 156.—Germany renounces, in favor of Japan, all her rights, titles and privileges—particularly those concerning the territory of Kiao-Chau, railways, mines and submarine cables, which she acquired in view of the treaty concluded by her with China on March 6, 1898, and of all other arrangements relative to the Province of Shantung.

ARTICLE 157.—All German rights in the Tsing-tao-Tsinan-Fu Railway, including its branch lines, together with its subsidiary property of all kinds, stations, shops, fixed and rolling stock, mines, plant and material for the exploitation of the mines are and remain acquired by Japan, together with all rights and privileges attaching thereto.

The German State submarine cables from Tsing-tao to Shanghai and from Tsing-tao to Che Foo, with all the rights which Germany might claim in consequence of the works or improvements made or of the expenses incurred by her, directly or indirectly in connection with this territory, are and remain acquired by Japan, free and clear of all charges and encumbrances.

ARTICLE 158.—Germany shall hand over to Japan within three months from the coming into force of the present treaty the archives, registers, plans, title deeds and documents of every kind, wherever they may be, relating to the administration, whether civil, military, financial, judicial or other, of the territory of Kiao-Chau.

Within the same period Germany shall give particulars to Japan of all treaties, arrangements or agreements relating to the rights, title or privileges referred to in the two preceding articles.

These are the objectionable articles which China considers to be unfair and unjust. To understand China's position, it will be necessary to review the facts of the case. In the year 1898 China was forced to grant to Germany the so-called lease of Kiao-Chau, and economic rights or concessions in the province of Shantung, the Holy Land of China. After the World War broke out Japan captured Kiao-Chau and seized the economic rights. There Japan remains, as she claims, a military occupant. On August 14, 1917, China declared war against Germany and abrogated all her treaties with Germany, including those relating to the leased territory and the German economic rights in Shantung. This declaration of abrogation was officially notified to and taken cognizance of by the allied and associated powers at war with Germany. As a result of this declaration, the territory of Kiao-Chau and all the German rights in Shantung have automatically reverted to China.

While the Chinese Delegates were presenting China's claims to the Peace conference for the restoration of Kiao-Chau and German rights in Shantung, Japan suddenly theatened war on China, if China should fail "to make Japan the successor of Germany in rights, property, and concessions held

by Germany at the outbreak of the European War." On February 10, 1919 the Japanese minister at Peking was instructed by his government to remind the Chinese Foreign Minister that "Japan had an army of more than a million men idle at home, fully equipped with arms and ammunition enough to conduct a long war, and to have pointed out that Japan had more than half a million tons of shipping, with the intimation that this would be ready on short notice for active work." Owing to the firm stand of the 400,000,000 Chinese people the threat of war on China was denied by the autocratic Japanese government.

However, the Council of Three was frightened by the intimation that Japan would desert the Peace Conference, that she would combine with Germany, and possibly Russia, if her demands relating to Shantung were not to be complied with. On April 30, 1919, they were hypnotized and compelled to adopt the clauses drafted by Japan, namely, Articles 156, 157 and 158 of the Treaty without any regard to justice and righteousness. These unjust articles virtually transfer to Japan the former German leased territory and rights in Shantung which have already reverted to China, the rightful owner. The statement of the Chinese Delegation at Paris declares:

It appears clear, then, that the Council has been bestowing on Japan the rights not of Germany, but of China; not of an enemy, but of an ally. The more powerful ally has reaped a benefit at the expense, not of the common enemy, but of the weaker ally.

Who can explain to the Chinese people what the Peace Conference really means by Justice? It has been intimated that the decision of the Council in granting Japan's claim was for the pur-

pose of saving the League of Nations. Here again the statement of Chinese Legation is worthy of quoting:

If the Council has granted the claims of Japan in full for the purpose of saving the League of Nations, as is intimated to be the case, China has less to complain of, believing, as she does, that it is a duty to make sacrifices for such a noble cause as the League of Nations. She cannot, however, refrain from wishing that the Council had seen fit, as would be far more consonant with the spirit of the League now on the eve of formation, to call upon strong Japan to forego her claims animated by a desire for aggrandizement instead of upon weak China to surrender what is hers by right.

The action of the Council provoked a nation-wide protest in China. Peace Societies and individuals poured in cablegrams and letters by the hundreds protesting against the proposed Shantung settlement and requesting the Peace Conference to reconsider the Shantung question with due regard to justice. On May 4, the Chinese Legation lodged with the Council a protest against the transfer to Japan of the leased territory of Kiao-Chau and certain economic rights formerly held by Germany in Shantung. Again on May 6, H. E. Lou Tseng-tsiang, head of the Chinese Delegation, read to the members of the Peace Conference the following declaration:

The Chinese delegation beg to express their deep disappointment at the settlement proposed by the Council of the Prime Ministers. They also feel certain that this disappointment will be shared in all its intensity by the Chinese nation. The proposed settlement appears to have been made

without giving due regard to the consideration of right, justice and the national security of China—consideration which the Chinese delegation emphasized again and again in their hearings before the Council of the Prime Ministers against the proposed settlement, in the hope of having it revised, and if such revision cannot be had, they deem it their duty to make a reservation on the said clauses now.

Unbiased spectators naturally think that all these protests, reasonable as they are, would meet with the approval of the Council, or, at least, receive proper consideration at the Peace table, and China should be allowed to make the reservation she suggested. But to the surprise of the whole world the protests were cast away into the waste basket—a strong indication that the Peace Conference was hoodwinked and swayed by the wilful few. The Chinese Peace Delegation, however, still pinned faith to the Peace Conference as is evinced by the fact that just three hours before the Versailles meeting on June 28 they addressed the following correspondence to M. George Clemenceau, President of the Peace Conference:

Paris, June 28, 1919.

His Excellency, George Clemenceau,

President of the Peace Conference:

In proceeding to sign the treaty of peace with Germany today, the undersigned, plenipotentiaries of the Republic of China, considering as unjust Articles 156, 157, and 158, therein, which purport to transfer German rights in the Chinese province of Shantung to Japan instead of restoring them to China, the rightful sovereign over the territory and

a loyal co-partner in war on the side of the allied and associated powers, hereby declared in the name and on behalf of their Government, that their signing of the treaty is not to be understood as precluding China from demanding at a suitable moment the reconsideration of the Shantung question, to the end that the injustice to China may be rectified in the interest of permanent peace in the Far East.

Lou Tseng Thiang
Chenting Thomas Wang.

In a few minutes M. Dutasta, Secretary of the General Peace Conference reported that none of the Big Three would consent to allow China to sign the Treaty with the above declaration.

It is seen that the Peace Conference has denied to the Chinese Delegates the privilage of making any suggestions. Their proposal for revision was rejected. Their request for making a reservation was turned down. And their plea to make a declaration was disregarded. Thus the Chinese Delegates had no alternative but to refuse to sign the treaty. Mystery still looms over the manner in which the Council of Three decided to bestow Chinese territory and Chinese rights in Shantung upon Japan. It may be that the Council was cajoled into accepting the Japanese viewpoint. Or it may be that the Council was bulldozed into confirming Japan's loot. Whatever may have been the method with which Japan approached the leading personages at the Conference the Council of Three was entirely responsible for the perpetuation of a crime which ought to have been rectified in the interest of justice and world peace. Japan's success at the Peace Conference smirches the honor and dignity of all the nations of the world. The subtle methods of Japan have shocked the whole

civilized world and turned the tide of sentiment against Japan more strongly than ever before.

China's refusal to sign the Treaty without a reservation or a declaration as to Shantung clauses is a protest against injustic as well as an appeal for justice. The statement of the Chinese Delegation, issued on the evening of June 28, reads in part as follows:

After failing, in all earnest attempts at conciliation, and after seeing every honorable compromise rejected, the Chinese delegation had no course open save to adhere to the path of duty to their country.

Rather than accept by their signatures the Shantung articles in the treaty against which their sense of right and justice militated, they refrained from signing the treaty altogether. The Chinese plenipotentiaries regret having to take a course which appears to mar the solidarity of the allied and associated powers, but they are firmly of the opinion, however, that responsibility for this rests not with themselves, who had no other honorable course, but rather with those who, it is felt, unjustly and unnecessarily deprived them of the right of making a declaration to safeguard against any interpretation which might preclude China from asking for reconsideration of the Shantung question at a suitable moment in the future, in the hope that the injustice to China might be rectified later in the interest of permanent peace in the Far East.

The Peace Conference having denied China justice in the settlement of the Shantung question, and having today, in effect, prevented the delegation

from signing the treaty without sacrificing their sense of right, justice, and patriotic duty, the Chinese delegates submit their case to the imperial judgment of the world.

Now the case is at the bar of Public Opinion. The facts of the case are already apparent. Is it right for the Big Three to take away the Chinese territory and rights just recovered from Germany and give them to Japan? Is it justice for the Big Three to deny to the Chinese people affected by this Shantung settlement the right of self determination? Is the Shantung award compatible with the world profession for a just and stable peace?

These are the questions to which the attention of the world is called in making its sound, impartial and final judgment on the case.

LIST OF PUBLICATIONS

1. China vs. Japan, February, 1919.
2. China's Claims at the Peace Table, March, 1919
3. The Kiao-Chau Settlement. May, 1919.
4. Might or Right? May, 1919.
5. Why China Refused to Sign the Peace Treaty. July, 1919.

These publications will be mailed upon application to Mr. Q. K. Chen whose address is given on the second page of the cover.